

## Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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OMB-01 IO-13 NEA-10 EUR-25 AID-20 RSR-01 /149 W

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R 180115 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6769

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 1547

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, NZ/ XB

SUBJECT: GNZ ASIAN POLICY: EDITORIAL COMMENT

1. PM KIRK RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT GNZ ASIAN POLICY IN THE SHORT TERM WILL BE AIMED AT STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES IN THE AREA, WITH SOME SORT OF REGIONAL FORUM AS A LONG TERM GOAL. NZ WILL MAINTAIN ITS PARTICIPATION IN SEATO AND ANZUK. THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL ENTITLES QUOTE IN PLACE OF SEATO UNQUOTE, WHICH APPEARED IN THE CHRISTCHURCH PRESS OF JUNE 15 IS, WE BELIEVE, REFLECTIVE OF NZ PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS POLICY.

2. QUOTE: THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER (MR KIRK) FOR MAINTAINING SOME NEW ZEALAND PARTICIPATION IN SEATO MAKE GOOD SENSE. THE TREATY IS STILL THE BEST GUARANTEE WHICH THAILAND HAS OF SUPPORT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AT A TIME WHEN THE THAIS, UNLIKE THEIR NEIGHBOURS IN INDO CHINA, HAVE SHOWN THAT AN INTELLIGENT COMBINATION OF MILITARY, SOCIAL, AND

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ECONOMIC OFFENSIVES CAN CONTAIN AND, PERHAPS, DEFEAT A COMMUNIST INSURGENT MOVEMENT. MR KIRK HAS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SEATO HAS MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES, ITS TWO SOUTH EAST ASIAN MEMBERS. UNLESS AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF ORGANISING SIMILAR PROJECTS IS FOUND, THIS ASPECT OF SEATO SHOULD CONTINUE AND HAVE NEW ZEALAND' S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION.

3. MR KIRK STILL SEEMS UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHAT KIND OF REGIONAL GROUPING NEW ZEALAND MIGHT WANT TO SEE FORMED IN PLACE OF SEATO AND OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNCIL ( ASPAC) , IN WHICH NEW ZEALAND' S MEMBERSHIP IS ALSO BEING ALLOWED TO RUN DOWN. THIS COUNTRY RUNS THE RISK THAT THE FIVE POWER DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE WILL SOON BE ITS ONLY FORMAL POLITICAL LINK WITH ANY PART OF SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ASIA. THE PRIME MINISTER, EARLIER THIS WEEK, PROPOSED A REGIONAL FORUM FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES, PERHAPS ALONG THE LINES OF THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM; BUT HE SAID THAT SOUTH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES DID NOT APPEAR TO WELCOME THE IDEA AND THAT NEW ZEALAND COULD HARDLY TAKE THE INITIATIVE. IT MIGHT BE WISER FOR NEW ZEALAND TO SEEK MEMBERSHIP IN AN EXPANDED VERSION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONA ( ASEAN). BUT, ONCE AGAIN, NEW ZEALAND SHOULD WAIT FOR AN INVITATION TO DO SO.

4. NEW ZEALAND HAS GREATLY EXPANDED ITS DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH THE REGION, AND THE GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY INTENDS TO CONTINUE THIS EXPANSION. VISITS BY NEW ZEALAND CABINET MINISTERS HAVE BECOME MORE FREQUENT AND THE RANGE OF LESS OFFICIAL CONTACTS INCREASES ALL THE TIME. NONE OF THESE, HOWEVER, IS AN ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE FOR REGULAR MEETINGS AT THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL BETWEEN POLITICAL LEADERS. LIKewise, MEMBERSHIP OF LARGER ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR THIS COUNTRY' S PURPOSES. THE SMALL, BUT VERY USEFUL, CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH NEW ZEALAND MAKES TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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REGION-- WHETHER IN DEFENCE OR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE OF VARIOUS KINDS-- SHOULD NOT BE OVERSHADOWED BY LARGER CONTRIBUTORS IN MULTI- NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

5. IN SHORT RUN, MR KIRK' S PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN NEW ZEALAND' S TIES WITH INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES SHOULD AT LEAST ENSURE THAT NEW ZEALAND

RETAINS A VOICE IN THE REGION' S AFFAIRS. THE  
NOVELTY OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN PEKING AND  
MOSCOW, SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OVERSHADOW EQUALLY  
IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS WITH MUCH SMALLER COUNTRIES,  
WHICH ARE CLOSER TO NEW ZEALAND AND WHICH CAN BE  
EXPECTED TO TREAT NEW ZEALAND AS AN EQUAL AND  
FRIENDLY PARTNER. END QUOTE.  
WOOD

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